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THEOSOPHICAL MANUALS

IX

PSYCHISM, GHOSTOLOGY AND THE ASTRAL PLANE

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PSYCHISM, GHOSTOLOGY AND THE ASTRAL PLANE

BY

A STUDENT

SECOND EDITION

The Aryan Theosophical Press
Point Loma, California
1912

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PREFACE

THE remarks under this head are intended to be introductory to each of the Manuals.

First, as to the spirit in which they are offered. These Manuals are not written in a controversial spirit, nor as an addition to the stock of theories awaiting public approval. The writers have no time to waste in arguing with people who do not wish to be convinced, or who ridicule everything which is new to their limited outlook. Their message is for those who desire to know — those who are seeking for something that will solve their doubts and remove their difficulties. For such, all that is needed is a clear exposition of the Theosophical teachings; for they will judge of the truth of a teaching by its power to answer the questions they ask. People realize, much more now than in the early days of the Theosophical Society, the value of Theosophy;

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for the ever-increasing difficulties engendered by selfishness and materialism, by doubt and the multiplicity of theories, have created an urgent demand which it alone can satisfy.

Again, it is necessary to state clearly and emphatically the genuine teachings of Theosophy, as given by the Founder of the Theosophical Society, H. P. Blavatsky, and her successors, William Q. Judge, and Katherine Tingley. For, as H. P. Blavatsky predicted, there are persons who have sought to pervert these teachings and turn them into a source of profit to themselves and their own selfish and ambitious schemes. The true teachings do not lend themselves to such purposes; their ideals are of the purest and most unselfish. Hence these persons have sought to promulgate under the name of Theosophy a perverted form of the teachings, from which Brotherliness and other pure motives are omitted, and which contains doctrines which H. P. Blavatsky showed to be maleficent and destructive. As these pseudo-Theosophists have gained a certain amount of notoriety by using the names of the Theosophical Society and its Leaders, it is necessary to warn the public against them

and their misrepresentations. Their teachings can easily be shown, by comparison, to be directly contrary to those of H. P. Blavatsky, whom they nevertheless profess to follow. Instead of having for their basis self-sacrifice, self-purification, and the elevation of the human race, these teachings too often pander to ambition, vanity, and curiosity. In many cases they are altogether ridiculous, and only calculated to make people laugh. Nevertheless, as these travesties have served to discredit the name of Theosophy and to keep earnest inquirers away from the truth, it is well that the public should know their nature and origin. They are the work of people who were at one time members of the Theosophical Society, but who did not find in it that food for their own personalities of which they were really in search. So they turned against their teachers in wounded pride and vanity, and started little societies of their own — with themselves at the head.

The writers of these Manuals have no personal grievance against any such calumniators. Inspired by a profound love of the sublime teachings of Theosophy, they have made it

their life-work to bring the benefits which they have thereby received within the reach of as many people as possible. And they feel that they will have the hearty sympathy and co-operation of the public in exposing folly and bringing the truth to light.

Theosophy strikes unfamiliar ground in modern civilization, because it does not come under any particular one of the familiar headings of Religion, Science, Philosophy, etc., into which our age has divided its speculative activities. It dates back to a period in the history of mankind when such distinctions did not exist, but there was one Gnosis or Knowledge embracing all. Religion and Science, as we have them today, are but imperfect growths springing from the remnants of that great ancient system, the Wisdom-Religion, which included all that we now know as religion and science, and much more. Hence Theosophy will not appeal to the same motives as religion and science. It will not offer any cheap and easy salvation or put a premium upon mental inactivity and spiritual selfishness. Neither can it accommodate itself to the rules laid down by various schools of modern thought as to

what constitutes proof and what does not. But it can and does appeal to the Reason. The truth of doctrines such as Theosophy maintains, can only be estimated by their ability to solve problems and by their harmony with other truths which we know to be true. But in addition to this we have the testimony of the ages, which has been too long neglected by modern scholarship, but which is now being revealed by archaeologists and scholars, as H. P. Blavatsky prophesied that it would in this century.

It may perhaps be as well also to remind those who would criticise, that the state of modern opinion is scarcely such as to warrant anybody in assuming the attitude of a judge. It would be quite proper for a Theosophist, instead of answering questions or attempting to give proofs, to demand that his questioners should first state their own case, and to be himself the questioner. The result would certainly show that Theosophy, to say the very least, stands on an equal footing with any other view, since there is no certain knowledge, no satisfying explanation, to be found anywhere.

Since the days when the wave of materialism swept over the world, obliterating the traces of the ancient Wisdom-Religion and replacing it by theological dogmatism, our religions have had nothing to offer us in the way of a philosophical explanation of the laws of Being as revealed in Man and in Nature. Instead we have only had bare statements and dogmatic assertions. The higher nature of man is represented by such vague words as Spirit and Soul, which have little or no meaning for the majority. The laws of the universe are briefly summed up under the term "God," and all further consideration of them shut off. Then came a reaction against the dogmatism of religion, and man pinned his faith to knowledge gained by study and reflection, limiting his researches, however, to the outer world as presented by the senses, and fearing to trench upon the ground which dogmatic theology had rendered the field of so much contention. The result of this has been that neither in religions nor sciences, have we any teaching about the higher nature of man or the deeper mysteries of the universe. This is a field which is left entirely unexplored,

or is at best the subject of tentative and unguided conjectures.

Until, therefore, religious teachers have something definite, consistent, and satisfactory to offer, and until science can give us something better than mere confessions of nescience or impudent denials with regard to everything beyond its own domain, Theosophy can afford to assume the rôle of questioner rather than that of questioned, and does not *owe* anybody any explanations whatever. It is sufficient to state its tenets and let them vindicate themselves by their greater reasonableness; and any further explanation that may be offered is offered rather from good will than from any obligation.

Theosophy undertakes to explain that which other systems leave unexplained, and is, on its own special ground, without a competitor. It can issue a challenge to theology, science, and other modern systems, to surpass it in giving a rational explanation of the facts of life.

Again, there are some questions which it is beyond the reach of the human mind, in *its present stage of development,* to answer; and

it would scarcely be just to arraign Theosophy for not answering these.

Judgment should in all cases be preceded by careful study. There are always those who will impatiently rush to questions which a further study would have rendered unnecessary; and it is safe to say that the majority of "objections" raised to Theosophical teachings are such as could have been solved by the objector himself, had he been a genuine student. In the ordinary courses of education, scholars are required and are content, to accept provisionally many of the teachers' statements, in full confidence that further study will explain what in the beginning cannot be made clear. In the same spirit an earnest student of Theosophy will be wise enough to hold many of his difficulties in reserve, until, by further investigation, he has gained better acquaintance with his subject. In the case of those who are not willing to adopt these wise and patient methods of study, it may be reasonably questioned whether they are the more anxious to learn or to disprove.

Above all it is sought to make these Man-

uals such that they shall appeal to the heart and not *merely* to the head; that they shall be of practical service to the reader in the problems of his daily life, and not mere intellectual exercises. For there have been in past days books written by persons more distinguished for a certain grade of mental nimbleness than for heartfelt devotion to the cause of truth; and these have appealed only to those people who love intricate philosophical problems better than practical work. But as H. P. Blavatsky so frequently urged, the message of Theosophy is for suffering humanity; and the great Teachers, whose sole purpose is to bring to mankind the Light of Truth and the saving grace of real Brotherliness can have no interest in catering for the mental curiosity of merely a few well-to-do individuals. Even soulless men, said H. P. Blavatsky, can be brilliantly intellectual; but for those who are in earnest in their desire to reach the higher life intellectual fireworks alone will have little attraction. We intend, therefore, to keep the practical aspect of the teachings always to the front, and to show, as far as possible, that they are what

they claim to be — the gospel of a new hope and salvation for humanity.

These Booklets are not all the product of a single pen, but are written by different Students at the International Headquarters of the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY at Point Loma, California. Each writer has contributed his own quota to the series.

For further explanations on Theosophy generally, the reader is referred to the Book List published elsewhere in this volume and to the other Manuals of this series, which treat of Theosophy and the various Theosophical teachings.

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I

INTRODUCTORY

THE purposes of this Manual may be broadly enumerated as two: firstly, to distinguish between Theosophy and the bogus imitations that pass under that name; secondly, to warn all students of mysticism and the public generally against false "occultism" and its dangers.

As to the first purpose, there are many forms of psychism, pseudo-occultism, spiritism, astralism, and so forth, which might be confused by the uninformed with Theosophy or with true Occultism. In our age there is a general ignorance on such subjects. Again, the cults and individuals who promote these movements trade on the names and influence of the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

It will be well, therefore, to make quite clear what is the true purpose of the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, and what is the true meaning of the word Occultism. To do this, we must go back to the beginning of the Society and briefly trace its history.

II

THE REAL PURPOSE OF THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY is a movement having as its avowed purpose the betterment of humanity. The benefiting of humanity is its first and foremost object — the reason for its existence. It is not, however, a mere philanthropic enterprise. It claims distinction from all other enterprises by its identification with Occultism. It teaches that Man is fundamentally a Divine Being, and that the welfare of humanity depends upon a due recognition by men of their Divine nature.

The purpose of the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY is to revive the ancient Wisdom-Religion, which is the parent of all religions, and which teaches Man the

practical Knowledge about the mysteries of his own nature, enabling him to live harmoniously with his fellows and to realize the true purposes of human existence. For the want of this Wisdom-Religion, humanity has, in the later ages, sunk into a condition of spiritual darkness and selfishness which threatened disaster to the human race.

H. P. Blavatsky, the Founder of the Society, came "to plant the seed of Brotherhood in the soil of Mysticism." The soil of Mysticism was already there, by reason of that law of cycles which, at regular intervals, brings the tides of thought and speculation over men's minds. A cycle of renewed interest in things relating to the invisible worlds was already setting in, as marked by the great outburst of Spiritualism and other such movements. It was known by H. P. Blavatsky and Those whose messenger she was, that if this movement in mysticism were allowed to grow unchecked in an atmosphere reeking with selfishness and the vices of civilization, and among a race wholly ignorant of the true science of

right living, the consequences would be fraught with extreme danger to the integrity of that race and would menace the existence of civilization. This danger was by no means exaggerated; indeed it is impossible to exaggerate it. When we reflect that all the wonderful inventions of modern science, instead of making life easier and happier, as they should and could have done, have not diminished the problems of poverty and have put new weapons into the hands of luxury, fraud and violence; that insanity, morphinism, alcoholism, consumption, are growing with appalling rapidity; that the resources of wealth and property are often passing into irresponsible hands; that we are losing our religion and other old-time moral anchorage; — when we reflect on such things, all too well known, we can realize what might have happened had occult powers, such as mesmerism for instance, been allowed to develop unchecked. There have been periods in the world's history when mighty civilizations have gone down amid a horror of darkness owing to the abuse of powers and to the de-

gradation of sacred rites to sensual purposes; and it was to avert another such calamity that H. P. Blavatsky was sent.

H. P. Blavatsky is numbered in the glorious ranks of many messengers who in various lands and ages have dared to stand forth and save a thankless world from itself. She was sent by Those who guard and preserve the Sacred Knowledge of the Ages, during the dark cycles, until the hour shall strike for it to become once more universally known; and who watch over the interests of humanity with eternal love, wisdom and patience.

The altruistic motive is the vital element in human life; its absence means dissolution. Who will dispute this proposition? But our civilization has put learning before ethics, acquisition before conduct. It was rushing into the realm of occult nature with the same careless indifference to rights and wrongs as it had carried into its other pursuits. It was indeed necessary to kindle anew the spiritual Fire of Compassion, the fount of all true knowledge.

From this it is abundantly evident that the purpose for which the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY was founded, was firstly humanitarian; secondly, humanitarian; and thirdly, humanitarian. What other aim could be had by the Great Lodge of Teachers, Guardians of the Wisdom-Religion, those in whom all wordly ambition, all personal motive are things of the long-buried past, and who live for humanity alone? Again, what was the motive of H. P. Blavatsky, the messenger? She had roamed the world in search of Truth, meeting at last with her Teachers, and had qualified herself through their instructions to go forth and proclaim it. Without one vestige of personal interest, she sacrificed wealth, position, ease, fame, to fill this invidious, thankless, and most arduous position; and all through the history of her labors continued to spurn every temptation of power, profit, or popularity, in order to adhere unflinchingly to the straight line of duty. It would have been easy for her to have founded an occult movement of vast di-

mensions with herself as its honored priestess, or to have achieved comfort and distinction in many another field; for great were her talents and personal advantages. But her motive was otherwise. It was to plough up the rough soil of Western materialism and in it plant securely the seed of the future growth of that great HEART DOCTRINE designed to save humanity from destruction by its own selfishness.

And, in pursuit of this object, she died, misunderstood but successful.

The Society, therefore, was not founded to teach magic to the cultured society of the West, nor to encourage curious studies. It was founded to do philanthropic work of a *new* — and high order. And such has been its consistent policy ever since.

In seeking for a suitable soil, H. P. Blavatsky looked around for some body of people whose minds should be open for the reception of unfamiliar truths. Just then the Spiritist or Spiritualist movement was prominent and contained a few men and women of a super-

ior sort. She appealed to these; but before long it became evident that materialism and circumscription of ideals would prevent this movement from seizing the importance of the occasion. The Spiritists were then more interested in materializations, communications, and personal rivalries, than in promoting a great Cause. H. P. Blavatsky had to seek elsewhere for her suitable soil. For this she has been accused of having been a Spiritualist, and for having invented Theosophy afterwards!

Next she worked through a group of people in India who had open minds on many questions, but were not attached to any particular cult. But most of these showed themselves to be more interested in the question of occult phenomena than in the sublime teachings and noble Cause to which she was endeavoring to attach them. When it was seen that Theosophy could not stop by the wayside in order to foster clubs for private research in magic or dilettante societies for curious studies, but that its service demanded unflinch-

ing self-sacrifice and the subjection of personal interests, these inquirers largely dropped off and H. P. Blavatsky passed on to other fields of work.

The summing up of the matter is this. That the policy of the Society has never for an instant deviated from the strict original lines of pure philanthropy and devotion to the highest good of humanity. It has continued to flourish for over thirty years with its original purity absolutely unimpaired, resisting every effort to divert it off on side lines. In order to preserve this straight course, it has frequently let pass the (apparently) brightest chances of self-advancement and popularity, and has sacrificed able and prominent workers sooner than retain them in its ranks after their aims have deviated from its own. Thus it is clear that the purpose of THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY is not to teach people magic or occult powers, but that its aims are still, as ever, the advancement of the race.

III

WASTE-PRODUCTS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

SINCE the Society has been composed of men and women of varying degrees of perfection and perfectibility, it is only natural that from time to time, there have been members who have found themselves unable any longer to keep up with the high standards required of workers in that Cause. Having entered the ranks with mixed motives, in which genuine devotion was undoubtedly mingled with private ambition, they did not succeed in subordinating the latter to the former. Thus they eventually found themselves out of harmony with the Society and severed their connexion with it in order to pursue private ends. While most of the deserters merely dropped quietly out, there have been a few of the more masterful kind who have sought to es-

tablish societies of their own in competition with the original Society and depending upon its name and influence. One of the chief of these occurred in 1894, when a certain prominent member attempted to lead off the movement along lines of modern Hindûism divergent from those laid down by the Founder. Opposed in this attempt by William Q. Judge, H. P. Blavatsky's successor, who saw the imminent danger the Society was incurring from such a departure, this member endeavored to oust Mr. Judge from his position by leading an attack upon him.

The result was that most of the Theosophical Society re-affirmed their devotion to its original objects, and severed any connexion with the member in question and the few who held similar notions, leaving them to pursue their own objects. These latter thus constituted a factious theosophical society, having the name and many of the forms of the real movement, but differing fundamentally from it in aim and spirit. It pursued a path of barren study and of "psychism" divorced from

humanitarianism, which perforce can lead to little — if any — spiritual progress. A loosely associated band of dabblers in "occultism," phenomenalistic spiritism, and other such things, can hardly climb the Olympian heights.

This particular movement has caused some trouble to Theosophists owing to the name which it brings upon Theosophy. For its leaders teach, under the name of Theosophy, many purely sectarian dogmas of modern (degenerate) Brâhmanism and other religions; and are said to advocate matters which all sober minds must condemn, such, for instance, as child-marriage in India.

This movement and others like it can be recognized by their fruits. Often they do not even profess humanitarianism; and when they do one looks in vain for the results. They have no visible results to show; no wholesome activities or constructive enterprises can, we presume, be the outcome of such teachings, which minister, evidently, to curiosity and vain self-interests.

The public should be on its guard against

misrepresentations of Theosophical doctrines. If they are not vouched for by Katherine Tingley, the present Leader and Official Head of the Theosophical Society, they are in all probability, bogus as concerns the Esoteric Wisdom; but they can generally be recognized by their exposition, which does not reflect the broad Theosophical spirit.

IV

OCCULTISM AND THE OCCULT ARTS

THIS distinction was drawn by H. P. Blavatsky between true and beneficent Magic, and false and selfish Magic.

Occultism is the science which teaches us how to use our Spiritual powers for the benefit of humanity. The occult arts teach how to use some of the secret forces of the animal or passional nature, for private and selfish purposes. The two are somtimes distinguished as White Magic and Black Magic. The former is beneficent, the latter maleficent.

What makes the difference between White and Black Magic is *motive.* Occultism can only be pursued with an unselfish motive. With any other motive it degenerates into Black Magic. This can readily be understood in the case of an actively evil motive. But there are many motives which are *apparently*

innocent and guileless. These are what deceive people who purpose to study Occultism. They should be warned that in such matters, every motive that is not definitely unselfish is selfish, though the selfishness may be veiled. Mere curiosity, for instance, is not a beneficent motive; it is grounded in the desire for knowledge apart from right use of knowledge. Again, there may be some who imagine that they can use the occult arts, for example hypnotism, in the cure of disease or bad habits. These again should be warned that they are endangering both their patients and themselves. They are dabbling in unknown forces without having previously undergone the necessary purification; and, though their purpose may be on the whole beneficent, the *latent* defects in their nature will cause them to stumble unwittingly into Black Magic.

Thus selfishness and ignorance are both obstacles to the study of Occultism, and anyone who practises it without having overcome these obstacles is on the wrong path.

There are in Man certain mystic powers

belonging to the lower or passional nature, which are *comparatively* easy to arouse. But, when once aroused, they must be controlled, or they will overmaster the would-be magician. This is where the danger comes in. Desire is the great enemy; and the unguided practice of occult arts will arouse sleeping forces of great potency, intensifying the desires and menacing the moral stability of the practiser.

It is very necessary to urge the fact of the *sacredness* of Occultism. Its employment can not for a moment be divorced from the highest and purest motives. Indeed no human power can rightly be used with any but an unselfish motive — this is the great lesson of life; but this truth applies with greatly enhanced force to Occultism. In that domain the issues between selfishness and unselfishness become much more sharply defined; also the powers evoked are far more potent for good or ill. All these powers must be enlisted in the service of humanity. They must be controlled by a wise control. Otherwise we shall find

ourselves in the midst of a seething whirlpool of selfishness and corruption. Great is the misery already inflicted by abuse of science, wealth, and other powers. Far greater would be the menace, to individual and society, if occult powers were to be turned loose!

On entering the domain of Occultism, the adventurer throws off all his ordinary safeguards. He renders his nature abnormally sensitive to influences against which the gross matter of the physical body normally shields us. He calls up all the latent forces of his nature and awakens all the sleeping powers whose seeds lie dormant in the ordinary individual. He must either master these forces or be mastered by them. And herein lies the danger. For the ordinary individual of Western civilization is not able to control all of the forces which he now has, but continually yields to their seductions. How then will he fare when these forces are magnified in intensity and subtlety? The story of the unwary magician torn to pieces by the genii he has invoked is no fable.

Western civilization is the outcome of centuries occupied with habits but little conducive to the development of an aptitude for occult studies. Our past history is one of fighting, and (from the Oriental point of view) gross living. Often we have been addicted to excesses in drinking. We have glorified those qualities which make people full-blooded, muscular, unimaginative, fond of material pursuits and pleasures. Our habits are self-willed and self-indulgent. We are nervous, restless, impatient. Intellectually, again, we have developed along lines ill-suited as a preparation for occult studies. Both in religion and in science we have been materialistic; for neither of these teaches us anything definite about our interior nature. In fact, it is not too much to say that by both it is almost totally ignored. Consequently we do not even know whether we have any interior nature, and there are no terms in our language in which to express the teachings of Occultism. The ideas introduced by a study of Occultism are so novel and strange that we are lost when we try to grasp

them. In addition to this we have developed a peculiar mode of reasoning which seems to us to be the acme of logicality and common-sense, but which is really quite special; and our minds are stocked with a multitude of ideas and conceptions derived from *our* theological and scientific modes of thought. So there is a great deal of unlearning to be done.

But worst of all is our "individualism." The accentuation of personality, which is the greatest bar to Occultism, is the very thing our civilization most fosters and prides itself upon. From earliest youth we are trained in the spirit of emulation, which follows us through our school-life and into the world of affairs, where competition is the watchword. Competition is so rife that people even declare it is essential to progress! They have not tried the other kind! The only alternative to strife they know of is stagnation. But in Occultism it is above all things necessary to sink the sense of personal separateness; because Occultism means the developing of those higher strata in our being where the sense of separateness

vanishes. In the East the spirit of emulation has never been encouraged as with us. The people are more homogeneous and less separated in feelings and interests. The sense of personalism is not so strong.

In view of the above differences between East and West, it is clear that what may be harmless or even useful for the one may be extremely detrimental to the other. Most of our ideas of Occultism are derived from Eastern sources. To this must be added that the difficulties in the way of translation from a language containing innumerable terms that have no English equivalent are almost insuperable. Such a difficulty might not matter so much in a book of poetry or even history. But in a recipe book! In a book of instructions in a most abstruse and risky science! Think what might hinge on a trifling blunder!

Thus it is clear that to enter wholly unprepared upon the path of occult studies is extremely foolish and fraught with certain danger both to the individual and to society. The student will never be able to keep his balance,

and will either wander off upon some foolish side-track or contract some infirmity that will ruin his life. If successful in any sense, it can only be in the sense of becoming a conscious black magician and serving the powers of evil.

All human powers if used selfishly, work harm to the individual and to humanity. But much more is this the case when the powers are occult. Hence it is clear that the road to occult powers must be carefully guarded against profanation by selfish use, unless the integrity of the human race is to be threatened. For this reason the path of true Occultism begins with the question of motive. Purity of motive is the only guarantee of success and safe use. No Teacher of Occultism will accept a pupil unless he has been securely tested as to the unselfishness of his motives and his ability to keep to them against all temptations. Unselfishness is the only guarantee that the student will not awaken the lower psychic powers instead of the spiritual, and fall instead of rising.

It will be found, therefore, that all who are

following the true path make altruism the first object. THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY is an agency for benefiting humanity, and it aims to use the awakened spiritual powers of its adherents for this purpose. But the adherents first show themselves ready to give up their life to humanitarian work; and such occult development as they may acquire comes to them in exact proportion to their trustworthiness. The desire for occult growth as such will not bring it; for such a desire is selfish. But the honest desire for service will bring increased power for service.

Our civilization has over-emphasized the pursuit of personal interests, such as wealth, private pleasure, position. This spirit we are apt to carry into our pursuit of Occultism, thus making it a matter of acquisition and self-aggrandizement. The ambition to be one of an honorable fellowship of Craftsmen, with ideals on an international scale, needs fostering. Spiritual gifts can not be "cornered" or amassed like wealth.

The following are some quotations from H. P. Blavatsky on this subject:

From "PRACTICAL OCCULTISM"*

There are many people who are looking for practical instruction in Occultism. It becomes necessary, therefore, to state once for all:

(*a*). The essential difference between theoretical and Practical Occultism; or what is generally known as Theosophy on the one hand, and Occult Science on the other, and —

(*b*). The nature of the difficulties involved in the study of the latter.

It is easy to become a Theosophist. Any person of average intellectual capacities, and a leaning toward the metaphysical; of pure, unselfish life, who finds more joy in helping his neighbor than in receiving help himself; one who is ever ready to sacrifice his own pleasures for the sake of other people; and who loves Truth, Goodness, and Wisdom for their own sake, not for the benefit they may confer — is a Theosophist.

But it is quite another matter to put oneself upon the Path which leads to the knowledge of what is good to do, as to the right discrimination of good

* *Studies in Occultism,* vol. I; see book list at end.

from evil; a Path which also leads a man to that power through which he can do the good he desires, often without even apparently lifting a finger. . . .

Occultism is not Magic. It is comparatively easy to learn the tricks of spells and the methods of using the subtler, but still material, forces of physical nature; the powers of the animal soul in man are soon awakened; the forces which his love, his hate, his passion, can call into operation, are readily developed. But this is Black Magic — Sorcery. For it is the motive, and the motive alone, which makes any exercise of power become Black (malignant), or White (beneficent) Magic. It is impossible to employ spiritual forces if there is the slightest tinge of selfishness remaining in the operator. . . . The powers and forces of Spirit lend themselves only to the perfectly pure in heart — and this is DIVINE MAGIC. . . .

All Western education is instinct with the principle of emulation and strife; each boy is urged to learn more quickly, to outstrip his companions. . . . With such ideas "educated into" him from his childhood, how can a Western bring himself to feel towards his co-students "as the fingers on one hand"? . . . So strong has personality grown in Europe and America, that there is no school of artists even whose members do not hate and are not jealous of each other. . . . In the East the spirit of

"non-separateness" is inculcated as steadily from childhood up, as is in the West the spirit of rivalry. Personal ambition, personal feelings and desires, are not encouraged to grow so rampant there.

When the soil is naturally good, it is cultivated in the right way, and the child grows into a man in whom the habit of subordination of one's lower to one's Higher Self is strong and powerful.

From "OCCULTISM AND THE OCCULT ARTS" *

Occultism differs from Magic and other secret Sciences as the glorious sun does from a rush-light, as the immutable and immortal Spirit of Man — the reflection of the absolute, causeless, and unknowable ALL — differs from the mortal clay, the human body.

In our highly civilized West, where modern languages have been formed, and words coined, in the wake of ideas and thoughts . . . the more the latter became materialized in the cold atmosphere of Western selfishness and its incessant chase after the goods of this world, the less was there any need felt for the production of new terms to express that which was tacitly regarded as absolute and exploded "superstition". . . . Therefore we have no terms in the English tongue to define and shade the difference of such abnormal powers, or the Sciences that

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* *Studies in Occultism*, vol. I.

lead to the acquisition of them, with the nicety possible in the Eastern languages. . . . *Âtmâ-Vidyâ,* a term which is translated simply, "Knowledge of the Soul," true Wisdom by the Orientalists, but which means far more . . . is the only kind of Occultism that any Theosophist who . . . would be wise and unselfish, ought to strive after. All the rest is some branch of the "Occult Sciences," i. e., Arts based on the knowledge of the ultimate essence of all things in the Kingdoms of Nature. Alchemy, Astrology, Occult Physiology, Chiromancy, exist in Nature, and the exact Sciences — perhaps so called because they are found in this age of paradoxical Philosophies to be the reverse — have already discovered not a few of the secrets of the above Arts. But the clairvoyance symbolized in India as the "Eye of Siva," called in Japan, "infinite Vision," is not Hypnotism, the illegitimate son of Mesmerism, and is not to be acquired by such Arts. All the others may be mastered and results obtained, whether good, bad, or indifferent; but *Âtmâ-Vidyâ* sets small value on them. It includes them all and may even use them occasionally, but it does so after purifying them of their dross, for beneficent purposes, and taking care to deprive them of every element of selfish motive. . . .

True Occultism or Theosophy is the "Great Renunciation of self," unconditionally and absolutely, in thought as in action. . . .

There are those whose reasoning powers have been so distorted by foreign influences that they imagine that animal passions can be so sublimated and elevated that their fury, force and fire, can, so to speak, be turned inwards; that they can be stored and shut up in one's breast until their energy is, not expanded, but turned towards higher and more holy purposes: namely until their collective and unexpanded strength enable their possessor to enter the true Sanctuary of the Soul and stand therein in the presence of the Master — the HIGHER SELF! For this purpose they will not struggle with their passions nor slay them. They will simply, by a strong effort of will put down the fierce flames and keep them at bay within their natures, allowing the fire to smoulder under a thin layer of ashes. . . . Oh, poor blind visionaries! . . .

We are in the *Kali Yuga* (Black Age), and its fatal influence is a thousandfold more powerful in the West than it is in the East; hence the easy preys made by the powers of the Age of Darkness in this cyclic struggle, and the many delusions under which the world is now laboring. One of these is the relative facility with which men fancy that they can get at the "Gate" and cross the threshold of Occultism without any great sacrifice.

From "THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE"

Saith the Pupil:

O Teacher, what shall I do to reach to Wisdom?

O Wise One, what, to gain perfection?

Search for the Paths. But, O Lanoo (disciple), be of clean heart before thou startest on thy journey. Before thou takest thy first step learn to discern the real from the false, the ever-fleeting from the everlasting. Learn above all to separate Head-learning from Soul-Wisdom, the "Eye" from the "Heart" doctrine.

Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child.

To live to benefit mankind is the first step. To practise the six glorious virtues is the second.

'Tis from the bud of Renunciation of the Self that springeth the sweet fruit of final Liberation.

Be humble if thou wouldst attain to Wisdom.

Hast thou attuned thy being to humanity's great pain, O candidate for light?

Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?

If through the Hall of Wisdom thou wouldst reach the Vale of Bliss, Disciple, close fast thy senses against the great dire heresy of separateness that weans thee from the rest.

Ere thy Soul's mind can understand, the bud of personality must be crushed out, the worm of sense destroyed past resurrection.

Desire nothing. Chafe not at Karma, nor at Nature's changeless laws. But struggle only with the personal, the transitory, the evanescent and the perishable.

Beware lest thou shouldst set a foot still soiled upon the ladder's lowest rung. Woe unto him who dares pollute one rung with miry feet. The foul and viscous mud will dry, become tenacious, then glue his feet unto the spot, and like a bird caught in the wily fowler's lime, he will be stayed from further progress. His vices will take shape and drag him down. His sins will raise their voices like as the jackal's laugh and sob after the sun goes down; his thoughts become an army and bear him off a captive slave.

Kill thy desires, Lanoo, make thy vices impotent, ere the first step is taken on the solemn journey.

V

HYPNOTISM

HYPNOTISM is another form of Black Magic. It is the using of power over others for motives that are either selfish or ignorant. In the one case the Black Magic is conscious, in the other unconscious. Unless such powers are used with beneficence and knowledge, they are abused. Mere ignorant benevolence does not satisfy them. Hypnotists confess that the power they use is not understood by them and that it is very far-reaching and often produces unexpected effects.

When Hypnotism is practised as an entertainment, on the platform or in the social circle, it is a dabbling in the occult arts, which, as said, is rash and dangerous. If practised with the view of obtaining power over people it is of course deliberate sorcery. If practised with the benevolent idea of overcoming

alcoholism, etc., the benevolence of the motive can not avert the injury that may be done by the ignorance.

When Hypnotism is done with the consent of the subject, the subject renders himself passive and tries to surender control of his mind and faculties. The operator then exerts himself to assume the control thus laid down. If the matter ended here, not so much harm would be done. But it is found that a *rapport* has been permanently established between the two, the conditions and extent of which neither understands. Consequently there is unconscious interaction between the two natures, which may result in a transference of the faults of the one to the other — in either direction. Besides this, the subject has opened a door in his nature, as it were, and loosened the union between his will and his faculties. Through this open door may enter hostile influences, whose existence neither hypnotizer nor subject counted on. Every time the subject surrenders his control, he weakens still further his grip on his own faculties, paving the

way to mediumship and obession. The operator pours into his subject's opened organism influences from his own which he does not understand, and many of which may be injurious.

The folly of handing oneself over to a public hypnotist is simply inconceivable. Would any one allow a doctor to experiment on him with powerful new drugs whose effects the doctor did not profess to understand? Yet in this case only the body would be risked; whereas the hypnotic subject surrenders body *and mind too.* The influences to which he so surrenders as much of his nature as he can are more powerful, more subtle and more unknown than any drug. The character of the operator is not known. Even should he have the credentials of an honest man, so far as ordinary human judgment is able to assign them, might he not have secret defects? And even if he were honest all through, so far as he himself could determine, he still might be unfit to hypnotize anyone. For such fitness demands a greater purity than ordinary standards can measure. But often he is merely a

public entertainer whose real character, good or bad, is wholly unknown.

It is not safe for anyone to practise hypnotism, whatever his motives. Even a benevolent doctor, trying to relieve a man of a bad habit, would not be justified. In the first place this is a mistaken way of trying to cure the victim. Instead of strengthening his own control over himself, it ousts his control and substitutes that of another man. Hence when this extraneous help is withdrawn, the victim must find himself as bad, and probably worse, than before. To cure bad habits the ordinary methods of careful supervision and help in institutions devoted to that purpose should be used; and the victim shown how to develop his own will and assisted to regain control over himself. Under the teachings of Theosophy this can be done; for Theosophy searches deeper into the causes of evil in the character and can show people wherein their mistake lies and how to overcome it.

In view of the uses which unscrupulous persons may make of hypnotism, it is cer-

tainly not desirable that its use should become generally known; for we can not hope to be able to control the use of such a subtle power by legislation or police. But even those people who are regarded as harmless or even beneficent cannot be safely permitted to use this power, because they do not understand it, and as much harm may be done through ignorance as through malice. Not only is the practise fraught with danger to the subject, but also to the operator; for he puts himself *en rapport* with a large number of perverted natures which he is trying to cure, and soon the back-pressure of all this evil may flow in upon him and upset him, as many cases testify.

Thus, while Hypnotism used for personal ends is obviously maleficent, Hypnotism used for benevolent purposes is also maleficent, because it is an ignorant use of psychic powers. The violent interference with another person's will and faculties can not be justified on any grounds. The supposed cure does more harm than good, and the real cure can be affected in normal and natural ways.

VI

CLAIRVOYANCE

THIS word is usually employed to denote the ability to use the visual faculty of the astral double, without the intermediation of the physical eye, and the power of seeing forms in the astral light. It is true that in a certain stage of our development the astral or thought-world becomes objective to our psychic vision, and that we can see the thoughts of people objectivized as pictures, or perceive objects composed of astral substance.

This faculty is, however, a great danger and hindrance to real development, if forced and not allowed to develop normally. It merely increases our temptations, responsibilities and difficulties, without correspondingly augmenting our power to cope with them. If our desire is only to live the life of service, as is the case with all students of true Occultism, we

shall have no motive for trying to develop psychic powers before the time when it is right and expedient that we should do so. That time is when we have so far purified our nature from all vanity, lust, curiosity, ambition and other forms of weakness, that the powers can be possessed with safety and advantage. If, however, we undertake to force the development of clairvoyance, it is a sign that we are actuated by undesirable motives such as those just enumerated. The presence of such motives and of our unconquered frailties will render the acquisition of our new powers, if we are successful in developing any, a curse instead of a blessing. Thoughts and desires which have haunted us will now appear as objective shapes; our attention will ever be distracted by the multitudinous occupants of a new and inexhaustible world; we shall not have the power of dismissing what is unwelcome or of not seeing what we do not want to see. In many ways life will be more difficult and dangerous for us.

The physical body is a protection to all who

live in civilization and whose desires and weaknesses are not purified. To develop the astral senses we must render it much more sensitive, and this it is not safe to do without due protection and guidance.

The possession of clairvoyance would be of no use, either to ourselves or to society. Instead of adding to the number of our faculties, we ought to learn to make good use of those we have. But as it is, we are so lacking in self-control and poise that the senses and organs continually lead us astray. Much more would this be the case, did we possess the subtle power of clairvoyance. Unable to control the wayward currents of our thoughts, blown hither and thither by little winds of desire, emotion and caprice, we should most certainly fall an easy prey to the weird denizens of the new world into which we had so rashly poked our devoted head. That this is true can easily be seen in the experiences of people who endeavor to develop clairvoyance. In most cases they are fortunately unsuccessful; but in those cases wherein a measure of

success is attained the result is not worth achieving, being usually nothing more than the ability to see vague casual pictures that float unbidden before the eye, coming and going at their own will. If the clairvoyant should be able to see things in other people's minds, we do not find that his powers are of such a nature as to be useful either to himself or the other persons.

There are some individuals, born naturally sensitive, who use clairvoyance for exhibition purposes; and what applies to hypnotism, mediumship, etc., applies to this also: namely, that the use of psychic powers for money-making purposes is an abuse, and leads sooner or later to disaster in one form or another. Either the user becomes discredited or his nervous system breaks down.

There are a few people who possess natural clairvoyance in conjunction with a pure and disinterested character, free from all vanity, ambition and curiosity. They shrink from exhibiting their powers, which they keep secret as far as possible. They never abuse them,

and regard them rather as a heavy responsibility than as an accomplishment.

Astral vision, together with other powers, will grow normally in the course of our progress along the true Path of Perfection, and when we have reached that point where it is both safe and useful that we should have them. Needless to say, our own personal judgment, grounded on desire and pride, is no criterion as to when this time shall arrive; the powers will not come in obedience to a desire for them, since the presence of that desire would disqualify us for their right use. Only when we are disinterested about the matter will it be advisable for us to be so endowed.

But there is a higher kind of clairvoyance than that of the mere astral senses. This is the awakening of the Spiritual Eye — the true Intuition — the faculty which enables us to penetrate beyond the false ideas thrown up by the delusion of separateness and to glimpse the true Life, the Life of the Soul. This faculty is the Divine Light spoken of by Jesus and the other World-Saviors, as coming to him

who sacrifices his personal life to the great Cause of Compassion, and who purifies his heart from all the dross of passions and his mind from all the delusions of vanity and prejudice. Such a faculty does not peer into other people's private mental diaries, nor throw open the enchanted pleasure grounds of the inner senses. It enables us to discern our right path in life and to discriminate the true from the false. This faculty has its appropriate organs in the body; but it is not well to discuss this point, because it might lead to foolish and rash experiments. It is known as the "Eye of Siva," and the "Third Eye."

In earlier Races of humanity there was a physical organ, the Third Eye, corresponding to this inner faculty. We have a mutilated historical record of it in the stories of the Cyclopes, and an anatomical representative as regards surviving animals in certain species of lizards.

The development of this true Clairvoyance can not but be good; but it can not be gained by occult arts. Spiritual powers are the meed

of unselfishness and purity; cupidity in any form prevents their unfoldment. This fact holds good even on the physical plane, for lust and intemperance destroy the finer mechanism of the brain. Even in the mind, the presence of a desire would act like a flame, burning up the finer senses. Hence it is useless to try to develop this faculty by any ordinary mode of concentration or acquisition; for the efforts would defeat themselves. It must be allowed to grow spontaneously as the consequence of unselfish living.

VII

SPIRITUALISM

THEOSOPHISTS admit the reality of spiritualistic phenomena (though there are also cases of fraudulent phenomena), but deny the spiritualistic theories. One of the purposes of this Manual is to show that spiritualists are engaged in a most dangerous practice, which has been universally condemned by the wise in all ages, but into which we have ignorantly blundered in consequence of our ignorance on all matters beyond the physical plane.

Spiritualism is the modern name for the practice of communicating with the astral remnants of the dead and with certain semi-intelligent beings called "elementals," which are not human. This practice has been known from all antiquity. It is mentioned by the Teachers of real Occultism as one of the dangers into which a rash neophyte is apt to fall

if he enters upon the sacred Science without due purity of heart and life. Immediately beyond the physical world lies the astral world, the lower stratum of which, being nearest the earth, is filled with the basest elements of human thought and passion, and also with the "shells" of recently deceased persons, which shells are in process of dying out. (See the Manuals on *Man After Death,* and *Kâmaloka and Devachan.*) Anyone who, by nature or practice, is able to dissociate to some extent the astral body from the physical, is apt to come in contact with this dangerous and undesirable realm, against the assaults and contamination of which our gross physical body normally protects us. This is the case with mediums — persons whose astral body is loosely connected with the physical.

When these practices were revived in America and England about the middle of last century, ignorant people imagined that they were in communication with the actual immortal Spirits of deceased people! Hence the name Spiritualism. The phenomena may have served

to convince some materialists that there is *something* which survives the physical body and that there are certain laws of nature unknown to science; but the practice has not elevated the ideas of its adherents as to the nature of the "spirits" and their post-mortem destiny.

It is important that we should fully understand that there is nothing new about *post-mortem* "communications." Under the name of Necromancy this intercourse was known to medieval sorcery. In India it is known and feared as Bhûta-worship — Bhûts being the astral remnants of the deceased. It has always been regarded as a practice to be shunned and as belonging to the "Black Art." Its revival in the last century under the guise of a blessed revelation is due to the fearful ignorance of people concerning their own history and to the materialism fostered by both religion and science.

The *genuine* phenomena of Spiritualism are of course admitted by Theosophists. They may be roughly divided into communications, ma-

terializations, and other physical phenomena.

Firstly, as to communications. The nature of these shows the inferiority of their source. No new revelation has been given through their means. Once in a long while, perhaps, we may have had something of a superior quality, though even then nothing striking or original. But the great bulk of such communications are of a very inferior kind: platitudes, wordy disquisitions, weak moral injunctions. There is nothing said that could not be better said by many still embodied spirits. It is clear that such utterances do not proceed from the freed Spirit of man unless we are to believe that that Spirit loses in intelligence after its disembodiment. They proceed from one or more of the following sources: the thoughts floating about in the astral light; the minds and subconscious memories of the sitters; the lowest part of the mind of the deceased. When the medium becomes entranecd, he may simply read the subconscious minds of his circle or transmit any thought-current which may chance to drift his

way. Or, if he comes in contact with a shell, he may act as the mouthpiece of the automatic "mind" of that shell. The fact that a communication is received in an unusual way does not guarantee its high or worthy origin. The astral light and the subconscious memories of people teem with ideas of all sorts, mostly of the motley order that flit through our minds in the dream-state. The hand of the entranced medium may be guided over the paper by the entity which has obsessed him. His vocal organs may be used in the same way. Sometimes a person is able to write "automatically" without being entranced. Again messages may be communicated by a code of raps. In all cases the matter communicated is usually of a vague or very ordinary type.

Next, as to materializations. These may be effected in various ways. To quote from William Q. Judge, late Leader of the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, a man of great knowledge and experience:

> Materializaion of a form out of the air, independently of the medium's physical body, is a

fact. But it is not a spirit. As was very well said by one of the "spirits" not favored by spiritualism, one way to produce this phenomenon is by the accretion of electrical and magnetic particles into one mass, upon which matter is aggregated and an image reflected out of the Astral sphere. This is the whole of it; as much a fraud as a collection of muslin and masks. . . . The second method is by the use of the Astral body of the living medium. In this case the Astral form exudes from the side of the medium, gradually collects upon itself particles extracted from the air and the bodies of the sitters present, until at last it becomes visible. Sometimes it will resemble the medium; at other times it bears a different appearance. . . .

Some so-called materializations are hollow mockeries, as they are but flat plates of electrical and magnetic substances on which pictures from the Astral Light are reflected. These seem to be the faces of the dead, but they are simply pictured illusions. . . .

Three explanations of materialization are offered: First, that the astral body of the living medium detaches itself from its corpus and assumes the appearance of the so-called spirit; for one of the properties of the astral matter is capacity to reflect an image existing unseen in ether. Second, the astral shell of the deceased — wholly devoid of his

or her spirit or conscience — becomes visible and tangible when the condition of air and ether is such as so to alter the vibration of the molecules of the astral shell that it may become visible. The phenomena of density and apparent weight are explained by other laws. Third, an unseen mass of electrical and magnetic matter is collected, and upon it is reflected out of the astral light a picture of any desired person either dead or living. This is taken to be the "spirit" of such persons, but it is not, and has been justly called by H. P. Blavatsky a "psychological fraud," because it pretends to be what it is not. And, strange to say, this very explanation of materializations has been given by a "spirit" at a regular séance, but has never been accepted by the spiritualists just because it upsets their notion of the return of the spirits of deceased persons.

Thus ignorant men may co-operate with disembodied intelligences of a very low order, or with intelligences that never have been embodied, in order to produce either a "psychological fraud" or an obsession. In the Manuals on *Man After Death* and *Kâmaloka and Devachan* the nature of the *Kâma Rûpa* or Spook or Shell has been described. These entities are above all desirous of physical sensation, of which

they have been deprived; they often obsess weak persons against the will of the latter, causing insanity and crimes; but the (ignorant) medium positively encourages them, and mediums and sitters thus lend their bodies to the purposes of these too often unclean beings.

Next, as to the other phenomena, such as levitation, apportation, slate-writing and the like. There are powers in man and in nature not recognized by modern science, able to produce such phenomena; but they are quite indifferent as to moral worth, and their production is no guarantee of sanctity. If we could disengage our astral form normally, as the future man will be able to do, we should be able to produce such phenomena intelligently and voluntarily. As it is the medium disengages his astral form by an abnormal process, and produces the phenomena without being able to direct or understand them.

The effects of mediumship are always ultimately disastrous. It involves a yielding up of one's organism to the control of extraneous influences; and such surrender of our throne is

in itself hazardous. For into the open door rush all kinds of influences against which we are normally shielded, but to which we have now given access without waiting to aquire the necessary knowledge and power of self-defence. Such practices render one unbalanced and liable to obsession. But when we add that the influences to which the door is thus opened may belong to a conscienceless and often positively vicious type, the danger becomes even more obvious. Such a consorting with the denizens of Kâmaloka, and that too in the bonds of a union of no common closeness, is certain to work injury to the whole nature, physically and morally. Thus it is that many mediums fall a prey to disease physical and mental or lose their moral balance. The effect upon the sitters is the same in a less degree.

Humanity must have been deeply despairing if Spiritism could afford them true hope and satisfaction. Its few grains of promise are mixed up with a great deal of chaff. Many whom it may have benefited by introducing them to the idea of higher possibilities, have

left it to seek those posssibilities elsewhere; for a continuance in it means a repetition of a dreary round. The atmosphere of a *séance* is not inspiring. One asks if the mental fiber of those to whom it appears to appeal can be high. H. P. Blavatsky tried to lead the Spiritualists on to something better, but they were steeped in materialism — of all things! Their idea was, not to spiritualize life, but to materialize, if possible, the spiritual.

If we had the slightest idea of the wonder and extent of the powers latent in our nature, we would not allow ourselves to be victimized by beings which often belong to the lowest astral stratum and whose object is merely to prolong their life at our expense.

It should be kept in mind that the remarks on these and other subjects throughout this Manual are made as simplified statements of Theosophical doctrine, and with no desire or intention of wilfully attacking any sincere ethical beliefs,, however mistaken and erroneous the writer may consider them in the light of Theosophy.

VIII

PSYCHIC FADS

THEOSOPHY teaches the dynamic power of thought. Many people have found out the power of thought for themselves. In their ignorance and Occidental vanity they have regarded it as a new and wonderful discovery, and have attached the idea to all sorts of religions, sects, cults and philosophies.

Theosophy discountenances all such movements, because their followers are either floundering ignorantly, or else — consciously or unconsciously — misusing the occult powers of nature. The power of thought is good or evil according to the motive. If the motive is in any way selfish, even though *apparently* innocent, harm will result.

Is not the motive of those who practise mental healing and self-culture almost invariably a selfish and personal one? Regardless of their

merits and deserts, they crave ardently for better physical health or a more peaceful state of mind. Could they see more clearly, they might know that their illness is perhaps a blessing in disguise, as being a purgation of the soul or a means of acquiring fortitude and self-restraint. By removing a disease from the physical plane, we may drive it inwards and impair our mental or moral nature. The art of the ordinary physician is wholesome, because it applies physical means to overcome physical complaints. It does not drive the disease in, but removes it. But when we apply the powers of the will and imagination, we are invoking powers which we do not understand and cannot control; and, further, we may be guilty of degrading high powers to questionable uses.

There is no doubt that psychic healers can often perform cures, temporary ones. Thought has a great power, and sickness is often the result of delusion. But nevertheless they are guilty of violent interference with the course of nature, and we are bound to point out that the risk in doing so is very great. This is no

idle bogy, such as has sometimes been used to discourage truth-seekers; it is a warning issued by those who are aware of the dangers of dabbling in occultism.

Let us enumerate some of the dangers. First, when a man arouses the latent powers of will and imagination, he arouses a great deal more than he bargains for. He may banish his physical symptoms, but arouse worse symptoms on other planes. Our unregenerate nature is full of sleeping dogs which should be let lie. How many would-be psychics have found this out to their cost! Again, he has aroused a power over which he has not perfect control; and any moment when he is under the influence of anger or lust, he may do damage. Again, the powers which are aroused are essentially wrong powers, for the simple reason that they respond to the call of desire and impatience. They may proceed from the lowest centers of the organism, and will work mischief, even though the motive and intention of the evoker is apparently innocent and laudable.

When there is a large body of people prac-

tising these processes, we have a band of dabblers in magic arousing the latent forces that may produce results of far-reaching evil effect on humanity. A maleficent force may be generated by their *collective* action, and this force can be, and is, utilized by other minds actively maleficent, for destructive purposes. A motley and miscellaneous horde of people, of all shades of character, are united together by a psychic tie, and there is no guarantee whatever against the wholesale psychic evils that may flow from it.

Neurosis is a characteristic disease of the present day. Neurosis may be greatly promoted by such psychic healing. The intense accentuation of self-consciousness, the vividness of moods and sensations, the absorption in oneself and one's feelings — all these disagreeable symptoms characteristic of the neurotic are found rampant among the "new-thoughtists."

Where the intention is to cure oneself, the motive is obviously personal; and such a motive, however harmless in an ordinary way, is

not admissible where occult powers are concerned, because selfishness colors the energy with the Kâmic or *desire-principle* and renders it destructive. Where the intention is to heal somebody else, the same remarks will apply as were made in speaking of Hypnotism. The power invoked carries with it more than the invoker knows of or intends. It may carry, from his unregenerate nature, influences of which he is unaware, that will be harmful to his subject. Besides, equally with self-cure, it is an indiscriminate interference with the course of nature, like an ignorant prayer to God that our own foolish wishes may be granted. In short, it is simply a form of hypnotism, open to the same objection.

Among the psychics of many kinds we have a mixed crowd of people who have learned to use "influences"; and it seems inevitable that we shall have, if we have them not already, instances of strife, personal and party, which will disrupt those bodies. They contain no binding principle other than that which binds people together in a community of self-interest.

So long as desires do not conflict, all is well; but when interests clash, there will be strife.

The reason why these movements have gained some popularity is because they do really in many cases enable people to evoke some power and produce results beyond the normal. And because these results are beyond the normal, people in their ignorance of the mysteries of human nature imagine that they must be holy and beneficent. But there are many powers which, though from the view-point of our ignorance they can be called "occult," are nevertheless forces of the lower nature. The power of desire is very great; and when to it is added the power of the imagination, we get a dynamic agency that may produce results. But in all cases where the use of this power is selfish, or where it is merely ignorant, the forces evoked are dangerous. The power of desire, once awakened, may prove our master. We are apt to mistake it for the voice of God. The history of so-called religious movements is full of cases where some great "prophet" has begun with a "divine" message and ended

in disgrace. The power evoked was simply his own desire, which speedily transmuted itself into its lowest aspect and brought about the ruin of his moral balance.

It is indeed high time that people knew of the Higher Nature and of true Occultism, whose keynote is not desire but unselfish love and compassion; which knows no anxiety about the condition of the body or the mind or the circumstances, but has faith in the great Law it serves.

There is about the whole field of these new fads and theories of many kinds a something that is not healthy, a morbid atmosphere of introspection and circumscription to self, which must surely repel healthy-minded people. If the evil of life is self-consciousness, then it can surely never be cured by methods which only intensify it. The only way is to forget self in disinterested work for others.

CONCLUSION

IN these days, when humanity has become so intimately knit together by the invention of means of intercommunication and by the expansion of commerce, we can no longer, with safety to the interests of the race, live exclusive lives and confine our studies and activities to a private sphere. Our actions are far-reaching; we influence the world and the world influences us, as never before in history. It behooves each individual man and woman to recognize more fully, both in his aims and acts, his position as a part of the whole.

Hence we can not consider the present question as a purely private pursuit, but are bound to take into account its influence on humanity as a whole. The question is, what will be the result of a general diffusion of interest in the study and practice of the occult arts? For answer we have only to look around and see how humanity has used the powers put

into its hands by modern science, and we shall be ready to admit that what is most needed just now is not greater knowledge of science, but greater self-control and moral responsibility. Whatever excellence may be claimed for any science, we have to reckon whether that science is likely to be abused or not; and if so, we must condemn its indiscriminate diffusion.

People do not realize yet what they have already been saved from by the work of Theosophy. Without this work, we should now be in the midst of a pandemonium of "occultism" such as cannot be described. But Theosophy has turned most of the interest in occultism into right channels, associating it indissolubly with Altruism; at the same time forcing those who will not recognize Brotherhood as their guiding principle, into paths that lead to naught. The work of Theosophists will be valued in the future, when the conditions in the world will call for champions of the Truth, and there will be forthcoming a body of workers trained in the noble traditions of true Wisdom.

There is No Religion Higher than Truth

The Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society

Established for the benefit of the people of the earth & all creatures

OBJECTS

This BROTHERHOOD is part of a great and universal movement which has been active in all ages.

This Organization declares that Brotherhood is a fact in Nature. Its principal purpose is to teach Brotherhood, demonstrate that it is a fact in nature, and make it a living power in the life of humanity.

Its subsidiary purpose is to study ancient and modern religions, science, philosophy, and art; to investigate the laws of nature and the divine powers in man.

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